

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A computer-implemented method for generating anonymous leads from
2 anonymously submitted database search criteria, comprising:
 - 3 (a) generating a prospect having:
 - 4 (i) device-identifying information,
 - 5 (ii) prospect-identifying information, and
 - 6 (iii) search information corresponding to anonymously submitted
7 search criteria;
 - 8 (b) providing prospect information to a business expert in a prospect
9 presentation, wherein the prospect presentation is designed to enable
10 generation of a proposal, and wherein the prospect information does not
11 include the device-identifying information from the prospect; and
 - 12 (c) providing proposals to devices associated with prospects for which the
13 proposals are generated.
- 1 2. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the search
2 information also corresponds to post-search browsing activity data.
- 1 3. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the prospect
2 information relates to a plurality of prospects, all of which are active.
- 1 4. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - 2 (a) notifying a business expert of a new prospect; and
 - 3 (b) tracking a status of a proposal.
- 1 5. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the prospect also has
2 gateway information if available, and wherein the prospect information provided to a
3 specific business expert does not include data from prospects having particular gateway
4 information if the specific business expert does not have an affiliation with the particular
5 gateway.
- 1 6. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the providing
2 proposals step comprises:
 - 3 (a) receiving a request for a formatted set of data, wherein the request includes
4 a device identifier;

5 (b) checking a status indicator to determine whether a proposal should be
6 provided;
7 (c) adding a proposal notification to the requested formatted set of data, if the
8 checking step results in a determination that a proposal should be
9 provided; and
10 (d) sending the formatted set of data.

1 7. The computer-implemented method of claim 6, wherein the proposal
2 notification provides a link to a proposal-viewer, which enables anonymous
3 communication between the device user and the business expert.

1 8. The computer-implemented method of claim 7, wherein the status indicator is
2 included in the request, and wherein the formatted set of data comprises a web page, the
3 prospect presentation comprises one or more web pages, the proposal-viewer comprises
4 one or more web pages, the device identifier comprises a cookie, the status indicator
5 comprises a cookie, and the prospect comprises an XML data set.

1 9. A computer system for anonymously connecting business experts with
2 consumers, comprising:

3 (a) a database for storing prospects having search information corresponding
4 to anonymously submitted search criteria; and
5 (b) a server engine coupled with a network and the database, the server engine
6 being configured to:
7 (i) receive requests including device-identifying information and
8 anonymously submitted search criteria;
9 (ii) generate the prospects;
10 (iii) supply a business database with the anonymously submitted search
11 criteria;
12 (iv) provide anonymous leads derived from the prospects; and
13 (v) furnish proposals directed to users of identified devices.

1 10. The computer system of claim 9, further comprising the business database.

1 11. The computer system of claim 9, wherein the search information also
2 corresponds to post-search browsing activity data.

1 12. The computer system of claim 9, wherein the server engine is further

2 configured to not provide anonymous leads derived from particular prospects to particular
3 business experts based upon gateway information for the particular prospects and
4 gateway affiliation information for the particular business experts.

1 13. The computer system of claim 9, wherein the server engine is configured to
2 furnish the proposals by selective use of session identifiers and device identifiers.

1 14. The computer system of claim 13, wherein the server engine is further
2 configured to enable anonymous communication between proposal generators and
3 proposal receivers.

1 15. The computer system of claim 13, wherein the business database contains data
2 regarding real estate, and wherein the server engine comprises a web server, the session
3 identifiers are session cookies, and the device identifiers are permanent cookies.

1 16. A computer readable medium having computer program instructions stored
2 therein, the computer program instructions comprising instructions for:

3 (a) generating a prospect having:
4 (i) device-identifying information,
5 (ii) prospect-identifying information, and
6 (iii) search information corresponding to anonymously submitted
7 search criteria;

8 (b) providing prospect information to a business expert in a prospect
9 presentation, wherein the prospect presentation is designed to enable
10 generation of a proposal, and wherein the prospect information does not
11 include the device-identifying information from the prospect; and
12 (c) providing proposals to devices associated with prospects for which the
13 proposals are generated.

1 17. The computer readable medium of claim 16, wherein the search information
2 also corresponds to post-search browsing activity data.

1 18. The computer readable medium of claim 16, wherein the prospect also has
2 gateway information if available, the computer program instructions further comprising
3 instructions for:

4 (a) checking for gateway information prior to executing the providing
5 prospect information instructions; and

6 (b) excluding specific business experts from receiving prospect information
7 associated with a gateway if the specific business experts lack an
8 association with the gateway.

1 19. The computer readable medium of claim 16, further comprising instructions
2 for:

3 (a) receiving a request for a formatted set of data, wherein the request includes
4 a device identifier;
5 (b) checking a status indicator to determine whether a proposal should be
6 provided;
7 (c) adding a proposal notification to the requested formatted set of data, if the
8 checking step results in a determination that a proposal should be
9 provided; and
10 (d) sending the formatted set of data.

1 20. The computer readable medium of claim 19, wherein the status indicator is
2 included in the request, and wherein the formatted set of data comprises a web page, the
3 prospect presentation comprises one or more web pages, the proposal-viewer comprises
4 one or more web pages, the device identifier comprises a cookie, the status indicator
5 comprises a cookie, and the prospect comprises an XML result set.

1 21. A computer-implemented method for anonymously connecting sales agents
2 with consumers of housing, comprising:

3 (a) providing a software application designed to communicate with a database
4 containing information regarding housing, wherein the software
5 application is accessible via a computer network and enables searching of
6 the database, whereby search criteria is stored in association with search-
7 requestor information without a requirement of user registration; and
8 (b) wherein the software application generates prospects from the search
9 criteria for viewing, and the software application enables generation of
10 search-requestor-directed proposals based upon the prospects without
11 revealing contact information for the search-requestor.

1 22. The computer-implemented method of claim 21, wherein the software
2 application further enables anonymous communication between a proposal-creator and a

3 proposal-receiver.

1 23. The computer-implemented method of claim 21, wherein the information
2 regarding housing includes information regarding real estate for sale, information
3 regarding factory-built homes, information regarding common interest developments, and
4 information regarding apartments for rent.

1 24. The computer-implemented method of claim 21, wherein the software
2 application comprises:

3 (a) a presentation layer;

4 (b) a middle layer, having business rule implementation objects,
5 communications objects and database messaging objects; and

6 (c) a database.

1 25. The computer-implemented method of claim 24, wherein the database
2 messaging objects include objects for translating XML data into a database-specific
3 format.